

DAMAMA

Turn to Page
for the story of
the Arabian Nights
LED BY A DRE



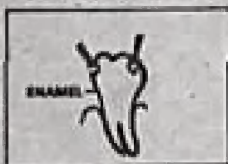
JUNE

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your family's
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Bournvita Wonder Page of Inventions-1

The Wonder of the Telephone

Inventor: Alexander Graham Bell
1847-1922 U.S.A.

Principle: Transmission of sound,
through variation in
electrical current.

Year: 1876

How does the telephone work?

The telephone has two
main parts—the
transmitter (mouthpiece)
and a receiver (earpiece).

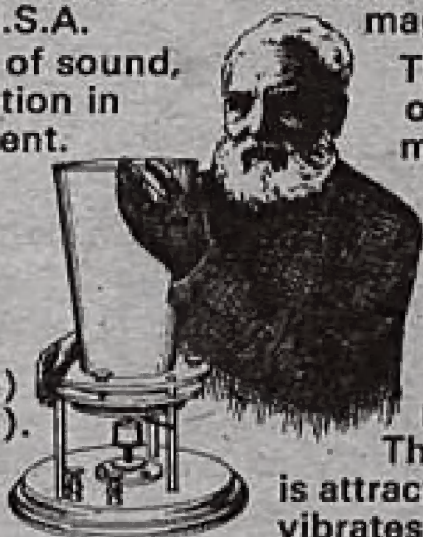
The transmitter consists
of a thin metallic disc
known as a diaphragm,
with carbon granules
placed behind it. The granules
are part of an electrical circuit.

When a person speaks into the
telephone, sound variation causes
the diaphragm to vibrate and by
compressing the carbon granules,
produces a fluctuating electric

current in the circuit which is then
magnified and transmitted.

The receiver consists
of a small permanent
magnet with fine wire
coils. These are set
close to a very thin circular
metal diaphragm. When
the transmitted fluctuating
current passes through
these coils, a fluctuating
magnetic field is set up.

The diaphragm being metallic
is attracted by this magnetic field and
vibrates according to the strength of
the magnetic field.
These vibrations of
the diaphragm
reproduce sound waves,
identical to those transmitted
and this is heard
by the listener.



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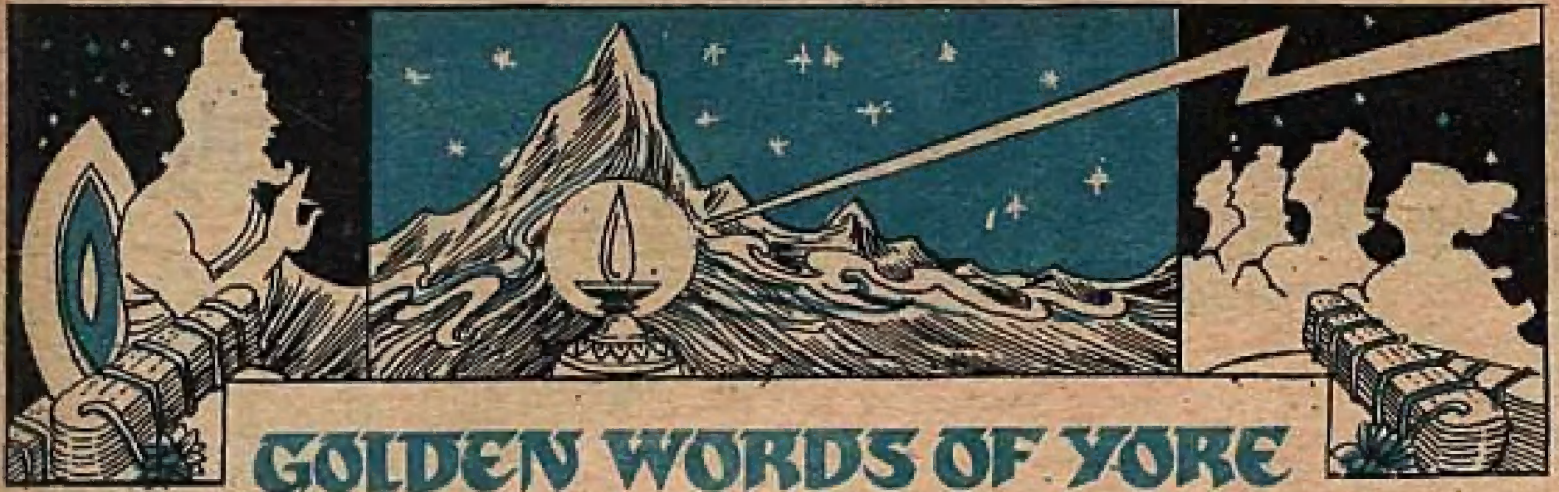
Founder : CHAKRAPANI

IMMORTAL INSPIRATIONS

In our life, we can just go on seeking more and more pleasure and ever new means of pleasure, we can go on asserting what we believe to be our right, we can go on zealously competing with others and feel proud when we have achieved what others have failed to achieve, but in our quiet moments, when we go deep into ourselves, something will tell us that all this is not enough. It is only through our following some higher truth that a real sense of satisfaction comes to us. The higher the principles one follows greater is the life one lives.

If the people through the ages love to read the account of the lives of persons like King Harishchandra (see *Story of India* in this issue), it is because regard for truth is inherent in man. Naturally those who have suffered for their deep commitment to truth, continue to inspire us.

It is desirable that we are aware of our soul's love for truth. That will help us to decide the step we should take when we face a dilemma — a choice between the wrong and the right. That will give us a satisfaction which will be far greater than what can come to us through a so-called success or achievement.



GOLDEN WORDS OF YORE

सुहृदां हितकामानां यः शृणोति न भाषितम् ।
विपत् सन्निहिता तस्य स नरः शत्रुनन्दनः ॥

Suhrdāṃ hitakāmānāṃ yaḥ śṛṇoti na bhāṣitam
Vipat sannihitā tasya sa naraḥ śatrunandanah

One who ignores the suggestions of well-wishing friends invites danger and makes his foes gleeful.

The Hitopadeshah

सुहृदि निरन्तरचित्ते गुणवति भृत्येऽनुवर्तिनि कलत्रे ।
स्वामिनि सौहृदयुक्ते निवेद्य दुःखं सुखी भवति ॥

Suhr̥di nirantaracitte guṇavati bhr̥tye'nuvartini kalatre
Svāmini souhṛdayukte nivedya duḥkhaṃ sukhī bhavati

One finds great solace from narrating one's sorrows to one's close friend, to a trusted servant, to a faithful wife or to a sympathetic master.

The Panchatantram

दुर्जनेन समं सख्यं प्रीतिं चापि न कारयेत् ।
उष्णो दहति चाङ्गारः शीतः कृष्णायते कर्म ॥

Durjanena samam sakhyaṃ prītiṃ cāpī na kārayet
Uṣṇo dahati cāṅgāraḥ śītaḥ kṛṣṇāyate karam

It is unwise to befriend or love the wicked. A live charcoal will burn the hand; if it is cold, it will blacken the hand.

The Hitopadeshah

After a tense few minutes, the landlord's son asked his maternal uncle, "Have you ever heard of a physician treating his patient with chisel and hammer?"

The uncle looked grave. One villager whispered to another, "There must be something seriously wrong with our landlord!" The other nodded.

"Uncle, do you hope that my father can survive the operation?" asked the landlord's son, on the verge of tears.

"Let us pray!" responded the uncle in a cracking tone, pressing his ear against the door. From the sound it appeared that the physician was cutting through the patient's ribs!

The door opened again. "Give me a crowbar. Be quick!" A crowbar was fetched immedia-

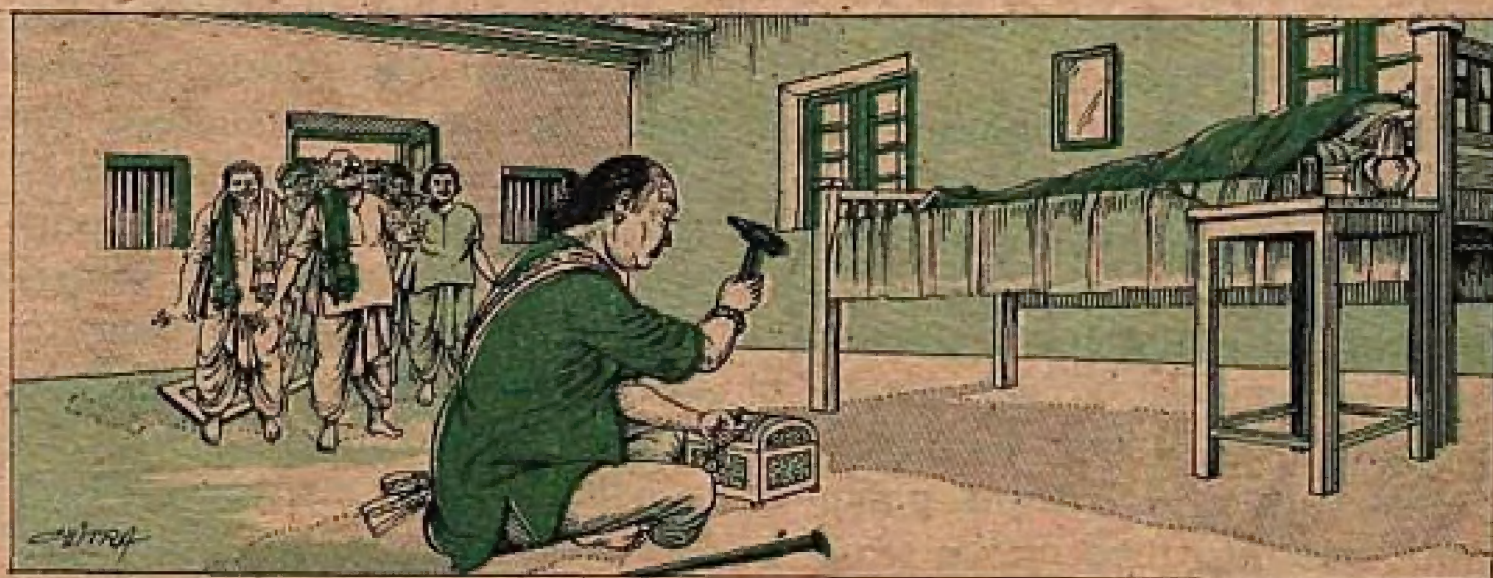
tely. The son asked, "Sharmaji! What exactly are you doing to father?"

Instead of giving any reply, Sharma shut the door again.

"He will kill father!" burst out the son, tears streaming down his cheeks. The uncle too found the agony unbearable. Upon a hint from him, the people gave a push to the door with all their might. The door broke open. They rushed in.

The physician was deeply engrossed in his efforts at opening his medicine box. He had left the key in the town and hence he needed the chisel, the hammer and the crowbar!

"Thank God! The instruments have been used on the box, not on the patient," observed the uncle with great relief!



PYAGARAJA

Fearful was the forest at night. But if the travellers had decided to continue their journey through it, it was because they had a saint in their company. The saint, of course, never claimed that he had any power to protect the party should they face any danger. But the members of the party had a great faith in his power.

The track that winded through the forest was narrow. The thick foliage overhead prevented the moon from lighting it. But the travellers could soon feel that they were being followed by some people who were coming closer. In fact the strangers were trying to surround the travellers.

Soon a wild laughter was heard, followed by some command. The travellers came to a halt. Those who were experienced among them recognised the ominous voice. It was a gang of notorious bandits.

The saint who sat in a palanquin was informed of the situation.

"How do we care!" he said. "Let us proceed!"

The saint's companions, however, were not so sure that they had nothing to care. There was a bagful of gold in the palanquin, given by a wealthy admirer of the saint. That was to be spent on Sri Rama Navami—the birth anniversary of Lord Rama.

But the saint instructed his party to move on—as if he was adequately armed to ward off any attack!

The party advanced. Nobody knew what was happening. All they heard was a cry of panic, followed by the sound of some people running for their lives.

Little did the travellers know that the saint had indeed an invincible weapon with him—the power that came from prayer to Lord Rama. O Rama, slayer of demons! Come to our rescue along with Lakshmana—he had sung.

They crossed the forest before it was morning. At noon they rested in a village. A strong

and stout stranger slowly approached the saint and asked, "Sir, to be frank, I am the chief of the bandits who surrounded you at night. Your bodyguards, those two charming young men, proved much more than a match for my gang. I have never seen such expert archers. I have followed you just to meet them. But where are they?"

The saint smiled, but tears rolled down his cheeks. He alone knew who his saviours were. They were Rama and Lakshmana!

Tyagaraja was the name of this saint. Born in 1767 of a

Telugu Brahmin family settled at Tiruvaiyar in Thanjavur district of Tamilnadu, Tyagaraja began his life humbly, but died, 80 years later, famous as one of the greatest musical geniuses of India. And as time has rolled by, he has been recognised as one of the rare geniuses the world had ever produced.

The ancestors of Tyagaraja, living in Kurnool district of Andhra Pradesh, had attracted the attention of the Kings of Vijayanagar empire for their scholarship and culture. At Thanjavur, Tyagaraja's father Rama Brahman, proved himself a worthy scion of the family.



He expounded the *Ramayana* in the court of the Maharaja of Thanjavur—while his youngest son, Tyagaraja, recited lines from the epic. Thus, the *Ramayana* had a great influence on Tyagaraja from his boyhood and his devotion for Rama ever continued to lead him on the path of God-realisation.

Music for him was the means for realising God. To begin with, he received his lessons in music from Sonti Venkataramanayya. But he had learnt within a year all the guru had to teach.

Thanjavur was a great seat of culture. The rulers of Thanjavur

liberally patronised the gifted musicians who came from different parts of the land. The people there had cultivated a keen sense of appreciation. It did not take long for them to recognise the merit of the young Tyagaraja. With a little effort, Tyagaraja could have received sufficient patronage. But he had a different philosophy of life. He would go on begging once a week and maintain his family with whatever he received.

This was a sort of ascetic discipline. This way of life never allowed one to be inclined towards luxury. The society considered it its sacred duty to



maintain such people who devoted themselves to spiritual quest or the practice of some lofty art like music.

Tyagaraja had a small family consisting of his wife and a daughter. But his fame as a musician and a composer of lyrics spread far and wide. As a result streams of visitors came to meet him. More and more disciples thronged around him. Tyagaraja was a generous host even with what he received as alms. However, his disciples and admirers whose number was ever on the increase would not allow him to bother about his worldly needs.

But, even at the height of his fame, Tyagaraja led an extremely austere life. He declined an offer by the Maharaja to become his court musician and lived in his small house at Tiruvaiyar. He had been named Tyagaraja after the Deity of the famous temple at Tiruvarur. He proved himself worthy of that name by his sainthood. Socially too he proved himself Tyagaraja—a prince among sacrificers.

Tyagaraja composed 24,000 songs—equal in number to the *slokas* in Valmiki's *Ramayana*. It is believed that this sublime achievement could be possible

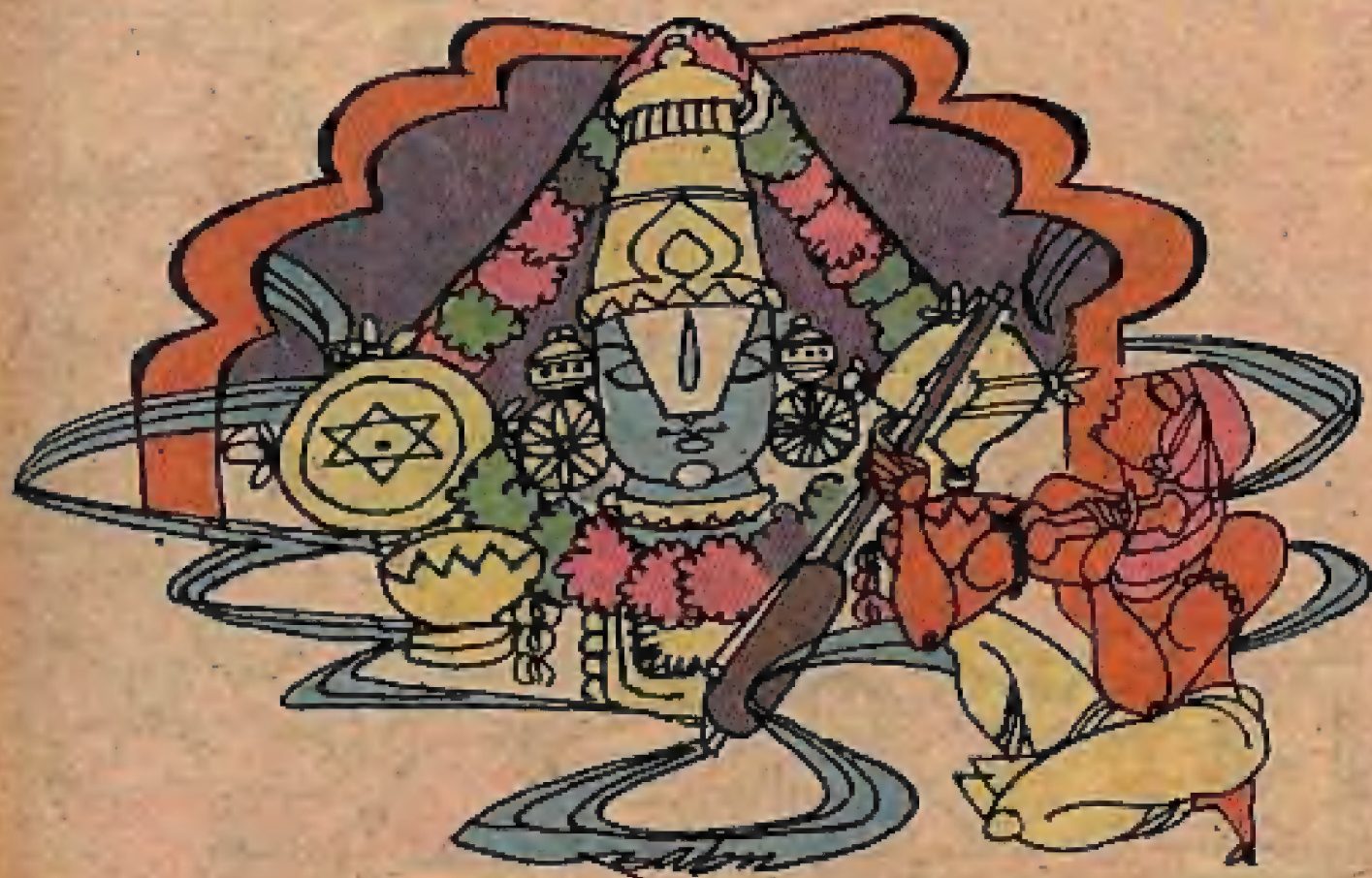


only with Rama's Grace. When he was a boy, a sage had asked him to repeat a mantra on Rama 96 crores of time. Over the years Tyagaraja completed reciting the number.

Tyagaraja visited many shrines including those at Kanchipuram and Tirupati. At Tirupati, impatient to have a glimpse of the Lord, he rushed into the temple before the screen at the door of the inner shrine had been removed. Disappointed, he sang out a touching lyric blaming himself for his own ego which, he thought, took the form of a screen and separated him from the Deity.

As he sang, the screen fell down and the Deity was revealed to him.

Tyagaraja's compositions are immortal classics. Their impact on Karnatic music in particular and Indian music as a whole can hardly be exaggerated. He passed away in 1847, after announcing to his numerous disciples that he was departing to Rama's feet. He was buried on the bank of the river Kaveri. Every year, in the month of January, a great festival of music takes place at Tiruvaiyar as a homage to the saint's memory. It is described by many as the world's greatest music festival.



The Prince and the WIZARD

6

(Samser who dreams of marrying Princess Pratiba, tends to grow into a tyrant. He loots an innocent crowd which was watching a musical performance behind the palace, simply because the princess pays more attention to the performers than to him. But the heroic Badal, in a daring move, imprisons him and his guards, and restores to the people their lost property. A traveller had forfeited his rare horse to Samser Badal and his lieutenant, Ramu, ride that horse.)

Badal, about to gallop away, suddenly pulled the rein and turned the horse towards the palace. The princess and her maids were still there on the terrace, amazement writ large on their faces. Badal raised his right hand and greeted the princess. Almost involuntarily the princess too raised her hand and returned the greeting.

"We must speed off, Badal, this is a danger zone for us," said Ramu.

"Yes, and it is foolish of me to make it dangerous even for the princess! If Samser comes to know that she responded to my greeting, she will not be spared of his wrath," said Badal as he galloped away at a redoubled speed, raising clouds of dust behind.





The crowd which was still watching Badal raised a joyous cry again and dispersed in a hurry.

About a mile away, on a lonely spot stood a house, deserted and in ruins. There, behind a wall, Ramu and Badal had left their horse fastened to a broken pillar. Now Ramu changed over to their own horse while Badal continued to ride the traveller's.

"There! I can see the poor traveller sitting down on a mound," said Badal, and both galloped in that direction. The traveller looked scared for a moment at their approach, taking them to be Samser's men.

But Badal dismounted from the horse with a broad smile and said, "We have rescued your excellent horse. Ride away as soon as possible."

The traveller looked overwhelmed. First he put his arms around his horse's neck and hugged it and then, embracing Badal, said, "I do not know how to thank you, dear friends, but if you tell me who you are and where do you live, I will meet you some day after my mission is accomplished and try to return your kindness."

"My friend, we too have a mission to accomplish—and a dangerous one at that. It is not wise on our part to give you details about ourselves. I do not know if we will meet again. But there is no time to waste now. We must haste," said Badal.

"Listen, young man, losing this horse of mine which is gifted with a sixth sense, I would have soon grown mad. Since you choose to keep your identity mysterious and say that we may not meet again, I must take this very opportunity to reward you," said the traveller and taking hold of Badal's hand, added, "You are young. Perhaps you can make best use of

the valuable gift which I am going to bestow upon you. Here is a magic ring. Whomsoever you make it wear will hold you in great love. Till then you can put it on yourself."

The traveller placed a ring on Badal's palm and hopped on to his horse. "Thank you," said Badal and he too got on to his horse, followed by Ramu. The two horses departed in different directions.

Shrieks and sound of kicks shook the area behind the palace. Needless to say, they were heard from the cabin inside which were imprisoned Samser and his guards.

Soon the noise attracted the attention of a number of palace guards. Passers-by too stopped to see what the matter was. One of the palace guards ran towards the cabin and opened its door. Like a bullet came out Samser.

"Do not think that I could not have broken open the door," boasted Samser as soon as he was in the open, looking towards the terrace where, he hoped, the princess still stood. But she was there no more.

And that seemed to infuriate Samser even more. "Why did you fools enter the cabin like



sheep?" he shouted, choosing to forget that it was he who had exhorted them to do so in fear of his own life. The guards, however, had no courage to answer back.

"I give you time till tomorrow. Go and find out who that audacious hoodlum is and where he lives. If you fail to do this much, you lose your heads before sunset tomorrow. He who succeeds in gathering the necessary information shall be rewarded with a hundred gold coins," announced Samser, gasping for breath.

The guards were about to run. "Stop!"

The command surprised not



only the guards, but also Samser. They looked up. It was King Bhuvan Singh who spoke from the terrace.

"None of you need go to look for that lad," said the king, and pointing his finger at Samser summoned him to come inside the palace.

Samser faltered into the palace through the rear door. He seemed to be on the verge of weeping when he stood before the king.

"I have received the report of the whole incident. I am sorry

for your humiliation. I don't know whom to blame—yourself or that daring lad," remarked the king gravely.

"That lad is to blame, of course!" answered Samser.

"I am not sure. But surely, I cannot let him get away with his easy victory over you, just or unjust. I have asked my ablest detectives to find out his whereabouts. That is why I did not allow those good-for-nothing guards of yours to spoil the game. But I wish, you were more careful of your conduct in future! Your humiliation tells on our dignity," said the king.

Samser kept quiet, but his facial expression showed that he hardly relished the king's advice.

It was twilight. Miles away, along the fringe of the wide forest, a few officers of the king were wandering and whispering their thoughts among themselves. Their expert knowledge had led them there, following the dust raised by Badal's horse and other signs. They were looking for further clues to lead them on.

(To be continued)

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LEGENDS AND PARABLES OF INDIA

HOW TO BEG OF A BEGGAR

A certain king once led his army against the ruler of another land. He, however, was badly beaten in the battle. His routed soldiers fled in different directions to save their skin. Even his bodyguards deserted him.

The king was closely pursued by the enemy. His horse fell to their arrows. It was narrowly that he escaped into a forest which was situated within his own territory. He was extremely fatigued and thirsty. He faltered in the forest for a while and then fell down and swooned away.

A hermit who lived in a cave close by, saw the king. He

revived him, pouring cool water into his mouth. The king relaxed in the hermit's cave for the night. By morning he had recovered his lost strength.

"O Sage, how should I repay my debt to you? Just tell me your need and it will be fulfilled," said the king when it was time for him to leave for his palace.

"I live quite content. I have no need of anything in particular," replied the hermit.

The king looked sad. The hermit asked him what saddened him. Replied the king, "O Sage, till today, I was happy with the fact that I had not remained indebted to anybody.



From today onward I have to remain indebted to you. That makes me sad."

The hermit kept quiet for a moment. He then said, "Well, King, I do not wish to deprive you of your happiness. Should any need arise, I will go and ask you to help me. I promise."

"Thank you, O Sage. If ever you feel the need of a house here, tell me and the needful will be done. If you develop any ailment, tell me and my physicians, who are the best in the country, will be at your disposal," said the king and thereafter he took leave of the hermit.

Few years passed. The her-

mit suffered from a disease. He thought of the king's offer to help him with the royal physicians should the need arise. One morning he proceeded to the palace.

The king, after his bath, was then praying to his deity inside his shrine.

"O Lord, grant me strength, grant me prosperity!" the king was repeating in the course of his prayer.

The hermit stood in front of the shrine listening to the king. Then he turned back and walked towards his forest. The palace officers requested him to wait for a while, but he did not respond to them.

Upon coming out of the shrine the king heard about the hermit's visit and prompt return. He made haste to catch him on the way. And before long he located him in the meadow that lay stretched between the town and the forest.

"Why didn't you wait for a moment, O Sage? Certainly you had need of something and that was why you had come. Please tell me how I can help you," said the king.

"It is true that I had need of something. But I have decided not to ask you for it," replied

the hermit.

"But why? After all, you had come all the way to ask me for it!" observed the king.

The hermit smiled and replied, "To be frank, just as you followed a principle according to which you were not to remain indebted to anyone, I too followed a principle. That was never to ask anything of anybody who was himself needy. I was under the impression that being a king, you had no need of anything. But I heard you asking your deity for a number of things. How can I beg something of a beggar?"

The king kept quiet. After a while he sighed and said, "My pride is shattered. I have to remain indebted to you all my life."

"You are mistaken there, O King. You have imparted me a great lesson. Thereby you have repaid the debt," said the hermit.

"What lesson did I give you and when?" queried the king.

"When I came to beg something of you, I heard you begging something of God. I asked myself, why should I not beg of God directly for sending me the help I needed? After so many years of meditating on God, was it not foolish of me to look to a human being for help? God showed me my error. And that He did through you. Hence I am grateful to you as you were grateful to me. Our exchange is complete!" explained the hermit and he departed.





Gifts for the Groom's Mother

The greater part of Pramod's earning was spent on buying ornaments for his wife, Sobha. Still Sobha was never satisfied. Once every year there took place a festival around the temple on the outskirts of the village. It attracted a large crowd. Sobha would observe the women of wealthy families visiting the festival. If an ornament worn by one of them fascinated her, she would pester her husband for a similar thing for herself.

Pramod's son, Ram, was an excellent young man. He had taken up a job in the town. He lived in the town, but spent his week-end with his parents in the village. He covered the distance by walk. One day,

while on his way to his village, he faced a heavy rain. He got onto the veranda of a roadside house. He was received by a girl who offered him a towel to wipe his head with and served him with a cup of milk. The girl, Ratna, had lost her mother in her childhood. Her father was a poor carpenter. The two had nobody else in the world to claim as their own.

The hospitality moved Ram. He spent some time talking to Ratna and her father.

Ram took a great liking for Ratna. He met her again on his way back to the town. Thereafter he met her frequently and proposed to marry her. Ratna's father had no objection

to the proposal; but he made it clear that he was unable to give even a single paisa as dowry.

"Who cares for dowry!" said Ram. True, he did not care for it. But his mother did. In fact, she had lately demanded a new necklace of her husband and upon Pramod expressing his inability to buy one for her, she had announced, "I will obtain two such necklaces from the man who would come forward to give his daughter in marriage with Ram!"

No wonder that she would burst out with fury at Ram proposing to marry a girl whose father was unable to give any dowry.

"I tell you, Ram, I would rather go all my life without a daughter-in-law than have one whose father cannot greet me with a pair of necklaces!" she announced.

Ram kept quiet. But he looked extremely sad. Pramod observed his son's reaction and felt no less sad himself.

"Sobha, you may decide to go without a daughter-in-law. But why should my son go without a wife?" said Pramod sarcastically. But it was no use arguing with Sobha. "Ram is my son. Whether he should

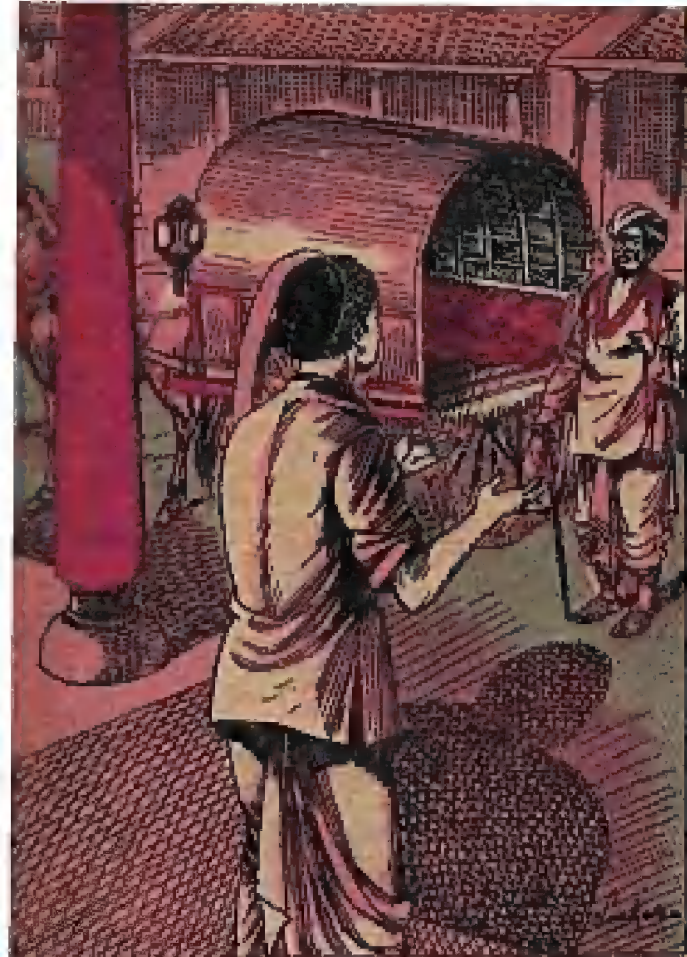


marry or not has to be my decision," she declared.

A few days passed. Nobody raised the question of Ram's marriage. Sobha was sure that the proposal brought forth by her son had been dropped. She was on the look out for a wealthy man willing to give her son his daughter along with a pair of necklaces for herself, of course!

It was a rainy night. Ram was away at his place of work. Pramod and Sobha were about to retire to bed after their dinner. Suddenly they heard someone knocking on their door.

"Who is it?" Pramod asked



through a window.

"I am sure, this is Punditji's house. Open the door. I wish to meet him," said a stranger who emerged from a cart.

Pramod and Sobha looked at each other. "Punditji" was the name with which Pramod's father was widely known. But he was dead since long. Who came in search of him?

They opened the door. The old visitor was happy to learn that Pramod was Punditji's son. But he shed tears upon being told that Punditji was no more.

"We were intimate friends in our childhood. We had decided that if one of us would have

a son and the other a daughter, the boy and girl should marry each other. But, as luck would have it, we both had sons. Soon I had to go abroad on business. I have just returned—grown into a millionaire. I have a grand-daughter of marriageable age. I wonder if my dear Punditji has a grandson to marry her!" said the old man.

"Indeed, we have a son—your friend's grandson!" exclaimed Sobha. She requested the old man to spend the night as their guest. "My son should be here tomorrow. I have no doubt that you will be happy to see him," she said.

The old man was shown into Sobha's own room—the best kept room in the house. After he fell asleep, Pramod asked Sobha, "How do you propose Ram's marriage with the gentleman's grand-daughter? Has Ram not decided to marry the poor carpenter's daughter?"

"Ram is my son and it is I who must decide his marriage," replied Sobha. Pramod kept quiet.

It was Sobha who gave out a sharp shriek in the morning. She had gone to greet the guest with a cup of hot milk. To her horror she found that not only

the guest was missing, but also her ornament box.

"No use crying. You are too old to wear ornaments, I am afraid," remarked Pramod while putting the cup of milk to proper use.

Later in the day Ram reached home. He seemed quite happy.

"Mother," he said, "Ratna's father has agreed to bedeck his daughter with ornaments. But what is more, he says he will be happy to present you with a pair of necklaces!"

Ram's words came as a great consolation to Sobha. "I know," she said with a chuckle, "You could not have chosen a wrong bride, being my son."

Pramod hid his smile in the cup.

The marriage was duly performed. Ratna came wearing a number of beautiful ornaments.

The pair of necklaces which her father presented to Sobha were of excellent design.

"Whenever I hear you speak, I have a strange feeling that I had heard you some day in the past," Sobha one day revealed to Ratna's father.

"That is rather strange!" exclaimed Ratna's father and Pramod together. The two looked at each other meaningfully.

"You should not have inspired me to steal from your house," Ratna's father whispered to Pramod from time to time. "But what was wrong there if the ornaments returned to my own house under new designs?" was Pramod's stock reply.

However, let us make it clear that Ram was not a party to the conspiracy of the two elders.





KING LEAR

Lear, King of Britain, is a whimsical old man. He decides to retire from the affairs of the state after dividing his kingdom among his three daughters.

The two elder daughters, Goneril and Regan, who are married to the dukes of Albany and Cornwall respectively, declare that they love their father more than their words could describe! But the youngest, Cordelia, says that she loves him as a daughter should love her father, "no more, no less"!

Deceived by the flattery of Goneril and Regan, the old king divides the kingdom between them. However, the king of France, impressed by Cordelia's honesty, marries her, although she receives no share of the kingdom, no dowry.

Now that the king has given away everything, he must depend on his daughters for his

own maintenance. He, naturally, expects them to be grateful to him and to give him peace and comfort in his old age. But shock after shock overwhelm him. The two daughters prove monstrously cruel towards their helpless father. One stormy night, the old king sees himself without shelter!

But he had two devoted friends. One was his fool. The other was the duke of Kent whom the king had ordered to leave Britain because he had pleaded in support of Cordelia. The duke had returned in disguise to serve the king.

In the meanwhile news of her father's plight has reached Cordelia. At her instance, the French army invades England to restore the old king to his position. The English army, under the leadership of the duke



of Albany and a villain named Edmund, confronts the French army. The French are defeated. Cordelia and King Lear are taken prisoners. At Edmund's order Cordelia is put to death. The shock kills the old king.

But the evil cannot get away with its booty! Regan's husband, Cornwall, cruel to dig out the eyes of a nobleman who sympathises with the king, is wounded by an agitated servant and dies. Goneril and Regan grow jealous of each other because both love the villainous Edmund. Goneril poisons Regan. But when her wickedness becomes known, she kills herself.

The duke of Albany, however, is a good man, though his wife was so bad! He becomes the new king.

King Lear is among Shakespeare's major tragedies.

A CASE RESOLVED BY SILENCE

A merchant was on his way to the town, riding a strong stallion. At noon he fastened the horse to a tree and entered a pond for a bath.

An officer of the king, also on his way to the town, got off his horse near the pond and fastened his horse to the same tree.

"For heaven's sake, fasten your horse to another tree. My stallion is quite unruly," warned the merchant.

But the officer paid no heed to the warning. Within minutes the two horses began fighting and the merchant's stallion killed the officer's horse.

The officer brought a complaint against the merchant in the court of the local judge.

"What have you to say about it?" the judge asked the merchant. The merchant kept quiet for a moment.

"He seems to be dumb!" observed the judge.

"Dumb? You should have heard how he shouted at me telling me that his horse was unruly and I should fasten my horse to another tree!" informed the agitated officer.

"That decides the case. The accusation against the merchant does not stand," declared the judge.





*New Tales of King Vikram,
and the Vampire*

VISIT TO A WONDER LAND

The night was dark except for the intermittent flashes of lightning. Thunder roared and there were frequent showers. From time to time weird laughter was heard and horrible faces were seen.

But King Vikram, with steady steps, returned to the old tree and brought down the corpse that hung from its branch. As soon as he began walking through the cremation ground with the corpse on his shoulder, the vampire that possessed the corpse observed, "O King, I am not sure about the outcome of your labours. However, there are instances of little labour yielding great results. Take, for example, the case of Haridas. Let me narrate his story to you. That might bring some relief to you."

The vampire went on: Haridas was a poor woodcutter.



One day, as he was about to fell a tree in the forest, a snake came out of a hole under it. Haridas, with his axe, hacked the snake. At once, from the dead snake emerged a luminous godly being, a *gundharva*.

To the surprised Haridas, the being smiled and said, "A curse had changed me into a snake. You released me from the curse. I am immensely grateful to you. Ask me for a boon."

Haridas bowed down to the supernatural being and said, "Well, I have no desire for any comfort in this world. But I shall be delighted to pay a visit to the sphere of the *gundharvas*.

Be pleased to lead me there."

The *gundharva* had not expected Haridas to ask for such a boon. He hesitated and then said, "Very well, I should fulfil your desire since I have promised to do so. But you must continuously be on your guard there, so that it is never revealed that you are a human being and not a *gundharva*."

The *gundharva* then uttered a hymn on Haridas and the next moment Haridas was changed into the form of a *gundharva*. He was asked to keep his eyes shut. The *gundharva* held him by his hand and whisked him to the heavenly sphere—the world of the *gundharvas*.

Upon opening his eyes, Haridas felt at once amazed and amused. Around him spread a world of great splendour. Spring prevailed there eternally and nobody knew what is sorrow. The *gundharvas* and the nymphs passed their time singing, dancing, and feasting on delicious stuff. They never grew old.

"It is better to live here for a day than to live for a thousand years even luxuriously in our human world," Haridas told himself again and again.

The *gundharva* who had

brought him there asked him at intervals, "Are you satisfied with your visit? Will you now like to go back to your world?"

"Thanks. Let me be here for a few more days," was the reply Haridas made very time. A year passed.

One day all the residents of that happy world were participating in a dance. Haridas roamed about amidst them, highly pleased at their performance.

"Come on, dance with me," proposed a nymph.

Haridas felt quite flattered. He said, "How beautiful you are! There is none in our human

world who could be compared to you!"

"What!" shrieked out the nymph. "How dare you, a human being, masquerade as a *gundharva*? I will curse you and turn you into a goblin!"

Haridas was in a funk. With tears in his eyes, he narrated the incident which brought him there and said, "Please take pity on me. Send me back to my human world without any curse."

The nymph indeed took pity on him and was willing to grant him a boon throwing him out of that sphere.

"Grant me that I can feed





my family without having to labour," said Haridas.

The nymph gave him a beautiful vessel and said, "You ask it for any food and it will give you the same. You can liberally feed your family and even your guests. But never ask of it for anything to satisfy your vanity!"

Haridas received the vessel with a great show of humility and put it to his forehead, closing his eyes. When he opened his eyes, he found himself in his own hut. He wondered if all that happened was not a dream. But with the magic vessel in his hands, he

could not doubt that his experience was true.

To begin with, he asked for a dishful of sweetmeats—*luddoos* to be precise—of the magic vessel. The *luddoos* materialised before him in the twinkling of an eye. And what delicious *luddoos* they were!

Soon his neighbours heard of the magic vessel. They came to have a look at it. Haridas entertained them to a variety of tasty items all produced by the vessel.

Two clever vagabonds befriended Haridas. They kept him pleased through flattery and feasted with him regularly. They knew much more about the items of food than Haridas. They would prepare the menu and the vessel would fulfil the demand at Haridas's asking.

One night the chums requested Haridas to ask of the vessel a potful of good wine. Haridas asked for it. The vessel seemed reluctant to meet the demand, for, the wine was produced a bit late.

Soon all the three got drunk. The two chums began to dance.

"Do not try to impress me with your dance! I have seen the nymphs dancing!" exclaimed Haridas.

"Do you mean to say that the nymphs danced better than us?" challenged the two fellows and they added, "Come on, ask the vessel to produce a nymph. Let us see her dance!"

Greatly agitated, Haridas asked the vessel for a nymph. There was no result. He repeated his demand, but in vain. Quite annoyed, Haridas picked up the vessel and brought it down, smashing it!

It was morning when he came out of his drunken state.

"Go to the forest and begin cutting wood again," said his wife. Haridas sighed and went out.

The vampire paused for a moment and then asked, "O King, Haridas had not asked of the *gundharva* the boon to solve his food problem. Why then did he ask for it to the nymph? How is it that he smashed the very vessel which provided him with his daily food? Answer my questions, O King, if you can. If you keep mum despite keeping the knowledge of the answers, your head shall roll off your neck!"

Answered King Vikram: "The story of Haridas is a fine illustration of the mind of an average man. He did not ask the *gundharva* for the boon of solv-





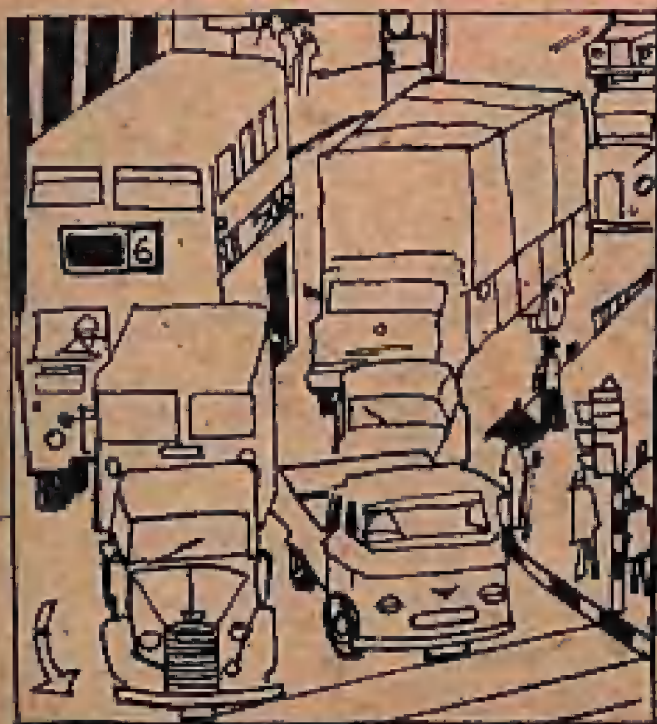
ing his food problem because food was no problem to him then. He laboured hard and made both ends meet. But as he lived comfortably in the world of the *gundharvas*, he lost his practice of work and worried about his food.

"As he was not required to labour for his food because of the vessel, he grew idle. Idle-

ness dulled his common sense and flattery by his chums made him vainglorious. With drunkenness added to his ego, he grew stupid and smashed the vessel. Such developments are usual with many people."

No sooner had the king finished giving the answer than the vampire, along with the corpse, gave him the slip!

SPOT THE TEN DIFFERENCES





VEER HANUMAN

One day, while Rama sat in his court in the company of his brothers, friends and ministers, Viswamitra the great sage rushed in and said, "I have been insulted by Yayati, the king of Kashi. You must avenge my humiliation, O Rama, by killing him. This I demand of you."

Viswamitra left the court in a huff, leaving Rama in a fix! Yayati was a tributary King under Rama. He held Rama in great esteem. He had earned Rama's respect as a good ruler. Viswamitra, on the other hand, was Rama's guru. It was he who had once led Rama and Lakshmana against the demons of the forest, teaching the two brothers on the way many a secret of wielding supernatural weapons.

It would be extremely painful to kill a just king like Yayati. But it would be a violation of a higher code of conduct to disobey the guru. Rama was caught in a great dilemma.

Had Viswamitra stayed on for a while, he would have tried his best to calm him down. But the sage had not given him such a chance.

He summoned his minister, Sumantra, into his private conference room and said, "I am afraid, I have to punish Yayati. But I want to avoid any battle between our army and his. Let Yayati alone face me. Let him die alone."

This is how the sage Viswamitra had felt humiliated by Yayati's conduct: One day a number of villagers from an



area which bordered a wide forest met their king, Yayati, and told him how herds of elephants regularly troop into their fields and destroy their crop. The king, in his anxiety to put an end to the menace of the elephants rushed in the direction of those villages, riding a chariot.

He had been informed that the elephants were just then busy making a mess of the corn-fields there was no time to loose.

Viswamitra, coming from the opposite direction, saw the king. He expected the king to get down and greet him, as was the custom. But the king, in his hurry, hardly noticed the sage.

Viswamitra thought that the king showed him disrespect deliberately. A king who was arrogant enough to insult a sage was unfit for ruling a country—concluded the sage. Hence he demanded that Yayati be punished with death.

After taking the decision to fight Yayati, Rama lost all his joy. He hardly spoke with anybody. His brothers and ministers too were sorry.

Yayati, through a messenger, was duly informed of Rama's decision. He as well as his wife Yasodhara, son Chandrangada and daughter Chandramukhi, were ardent devotees of Rama. They were, naturally, shocked at the unfortunate turn of events.

"I will proceed to Ayodhya and surrender myself to Rama. Let him do whatever he likes," announced Yayati.

The king, accompanied by his family, was on his way to Ayodhya when, midway, he met the sage Narada.

Narada laughed and said, "It is futile to think that Rama would spare you if you surrender to him. Rama never wavers, once he has taken a decision. If you wish to protect yourself, forthwith proceed to the Ashram of Anjana. Her son, Hanuman,

is on his way to meet her. He alone can save you."

Yayati felt convinced that what Narada said was true. He started for Anjana's Ashram. Anjana had just finished her meditation when she heard the cry: "I have come to seek your protection. Be kind and save me!"

Upon seeing Yayati who stood before her with folded hands, Anjana said with deep sympathy in her voice, "Don't you worry. I shall hand you over to my son. He will ensure your safety."

And soon Hanuman arrived there, coming from Gundhamadan. Anjana asked him to take care of their guest. Yayati prostrated himself to both of them and said, "I am Yayati the king of Kashi, a devotee of Rama. I seek your protection."

Hanuman lifted Yayati up and said, "Rest assured, O King, that I will do my best to protect you from any danger, since you are a devotee of Rama and my mother has been pleased to assure you of your safety."

"Now I must tell you about the exact nature of my predicament. Do you know who is coming to kill this innocent man? It is Rama himself!"

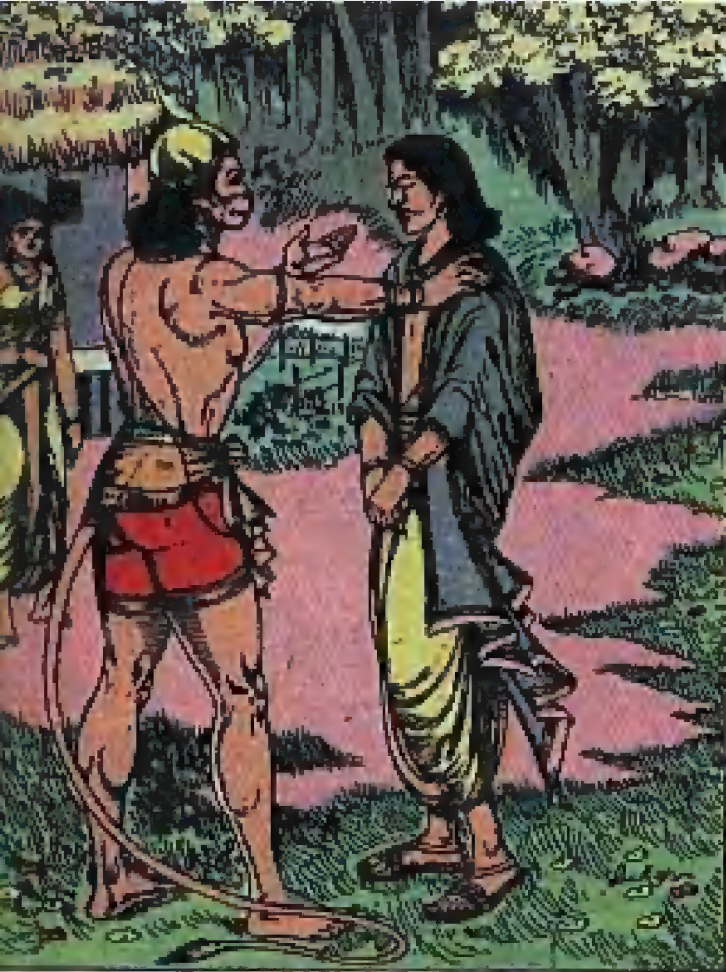


Thereafter he narrated the incident which had angered Viswamitra.

Hanuman stood speechless. "I wonder if I did not commit a blunder by assuring safety to Yayati without first ascertaining the nature of his difficulty," thought Anjana.

Hanuman understood his mother's mind. He said after a pause, "Mother, it is useless to brood over the stand we have already taken. Once we have made a commitment, we must stand by it. To protect one who has taken shelter with us is our foremost duty."

Before long the news of Hanuman granting his protec-



tion to Yayati reached Ayodhya.

In the meanwhile Queen Yasodhara and her two children had appeared before Sita. "Mother! I have come to you as a beggar—to beg of you the life of my husband."

Sita received her with the affection characteristic of her and said, "I know that your husband has been assured of his safety by Hanuman. What is then there to be afraid of? I request you and your children to stay with me." The children were lucky to enjoy the loving care bestowed upon them by Sita.

Rama, armed with his bow, proceeded to confront Yayati.

He was followed by his brothers, the ministers and the nobility. But nobody except him carried any weapon.

Hanuman ran to greet Rama. He offered flowers at his feet and said, "My Lord, have pity on Yayati. He is innocent. To wish to punish him does not go with your character. I crave your indulgence. Be pleased to pardon him."

"Hanuman, don't I know my duty well? Is it not unbecoming of you to try to influence me?" said Rama rudely as he made an attempt to push Hanuman aside with his feet.

"My Lord, once a slab of stone, at the touch of your feet, had been transformed into a woman. No wonder that I should now feel charged with power at the touch of the same feet!" said Hanuman.

"Do not waste words, Hanuman. Let Yayati come out. I am here to fulfil my guru's command," said Rama.

"O Ramachandra, must you earn the sin of killing an innocent person? Must you obey the guru's unjust instruction? Well then, do as you please. I must uphold the word given by my mother and do my best to protect King Yayati from your

wrath. You may kill me first," said Hanuman and he began to expand his body.

Rama smiled ironically and observed, "So, you are going to make yourself invincible, are you? I was under the impression that there was none strong enough to face me!"

"My Lord, if I have any strength in me, it is due to your Grace. And why should I fear anybody since I have derived my strength from you?" asked Hanuman.

Rama put arrow to his bow. Hanuman lengthened his tail and made a mounted coil of it around himself. Rama shot several arrows. But they could not pierce the protective wall of the tail.

Soon Viswamitra arrived on the scene. Hanuman had by then enlarged himself to the size of a hill. Rama was obliged to raise his bow high to aim at Hanuman's breast. Suddenly Hanuman sat down and said, "My Lord, now you can take aim without having to strain your neck."

Rama brought out a rare shaft and announced, "This is sure to kill you, O Hanuman. Once you have fallen, it will be easy to fulfil the mission which



has brought me here."

"Stop, O Rama, no more have I any grievance against Yayati!" It was Viswamitra himself who came forward with these words.

"Ready is this shaft to be discharged, O Master. It cannot be withdrawn. It is your earlier instruction that I must obey," answered Rama.

Concentrating on Hanuman, Rama said, "This shaft can be diverted from you only if you surrender Yayati to me. Otherwise this will pierce your heart."

"Let it, my Lord. Being a devotee of the compassionate Rama, I cannot betray one who has taken refuge in me. I welcome your shaft in my heart,"

said Hanuman, and next moment he tore the flesh of his heart apart by his own hands.

Lo and behold! the interior of his heart revealed the sweet images of Rama and Sita. Rama's shaft had already been shot. It touched Hanuman's heart and disappeared.

All those who witnessed the scene stood spell-bound. Rama lowered his bow and exclaimed, "Hanuman! You are indeed invincible. I accept defeat!"

As Hanuman took away his hands from his heart, the heart became whole again. He prostrated himself to Rama and said, "My Lord! Where is the question of victory and defeat? Residing within my heart it is you who reduced the fatal shaft to nought. How do I deserve any merit?"

Viswamitra embraced Hanuman and said, "Hanuman, without a comparison is your courage. Who else could have dared to face Rama's challenge? You are indeed Veer Hanuman!"

Hanuman bowed to the sage and he kept looking at Rama. His look was steeped in devotion and it gave out sparks of absolute trust. Rama smiled. Who could believe that he had been so stern a moment ago? Hanuman had no difficulty in understanding that the sweet smile he beheld showed Rama's true nature. His sternness was only a test for his devotee.

Sita's face glowed with a motherly love.

Hanuman took leave of them and proceeded to Gundhamadan for *tapasya*—askesis.

CONTD.





THE SILENT GUEST

The king of Chandrapur, no doubt, had in his heart nothing but the welfare of his subjects. His kingdom was made up of a thousand villages. He chose a leader over each village and thus had a thousand leaders under him to look into the problems of the people.

Once every year the leaders were summoned to his palace. They filed passed the king and the king reward them for their part in the people's welfare.

Before the leaders were summoned, the king sent his four ministers in four directions in order to ascertain the situation in his kingdom. The ministers, on their return, told the king, "The village leaders are sparing

no pains to keep the people happy. Everything is fine."

"The leaders should be fed sumptuously. The banquet we shall give them should reflect the condition of my subjects. Since my subjects are so happy, the leaders should be made happy too," said the king.

The quality of the banquet went up year after year, for, as the ministers reported, the people were more and more happy. The king himself supervised the feast.

Once, as he passed by the feasting leaders, he was surprised to see one of them, who looked like a mendicant, chewing the banana leaf on which he had been served the food. The

items with which he had been served were scattered on the ground.

"What is the matter with you?" asked the king. But he received no reply. The guest continued chewing the leaf. The king, upon inquiry, learnt that he was not a village leader, but upon a certain village leader falling sick, he had come to represent him, at his own suggestion.

All the other leaders laughed at the mendicant for his craziness. But the king kept quiet.

The king was not seen in the court the next day. He reappeared seven days later. The first thing he did was to put his four ministers under arrest. The next thing was to send his soldiers to arrest all the thousand village leaders.

To the perplexed courtiers,

he said, "The feast was supposed to reflect the condition of my subjects. The unknown mendicant, by chewing the banana leaf, drew my attention to the fact that many of my subjects were so poor that they had to chew raw leaves. I went out in disguise and found that the condition of the land was far from satisfactory. There was famine in a part of the kingdom. But the leaders bribed the ministers who reported to me that all was fine."

The king released the ministers and the leaders after a few days and appointed new ministers and leaders. But twice a year he went out personally to survey the condition of his people. Moreover, he found out the mendicant after some time and requested him to let him know the needs of the people.





MONEY ON THE ROAD

In a certain village lived Ravindra and Durgadas, two business partners. Not only were they ideals as honest and prosperous merchants, but also as close friends. When any two brothers in the village would quarrel, the villagers would observe, "It is a pity that you don't learn any lesson in unity from Ravindra and Durgadas!"

The people of the locality respected the two friends much. With the goodwill of all, they prospered more and more. But they spent a good deal in charity.

On a certain auspicious day, every year, the two friends took stock of their business and divided their profit. Ravindra

would set apart three hundred and sixtyfive rupees from his share and seal the amount in a bag. Durgadas observed his partner's practice, but he never asked why he kept the amount apart. Ravindra too was surprised that Durgadas never expressed any curiosity about it.

On the particular day of the year there used to take place a festival on a ground outside the village. In the evening Ravindra would quietly walk down to a well which was situated on an adjoining ground and place near it the bag with the coins. He never looked back to see who took the bag.

Once, after leaving the bag behind, he suddenly decided to

keep a watch on the area and see what happened to the bag.

He hid behind a tree and waited. Minutes later a man, the greater part of his face covered with a towel, reached the spot and picked up the bag as quietly as Ravindra had placed it.

It was obvious that the stranger expected the bag to be placed there. Ravindra was quite intrigued.

Ravindra followed the fellow. After a while the fellow removed the towel from his face. To his great surprise Ravindra saw the fellow to be none other than his partner,

Durgadas!

"My friend, this is most unexpected! I leave the money on the road so that some needy person would come across it and the money would change the course of his life!" said Ravindra.

"Ravindra, I hope henceforth you will not be guided by your illusion. Once you leave the money in the open, there is no certainty that it will not fall into evil hands! It may change the course of one's life, but who can say that the change will be for good and not for bad?" asked Durgadas.

"To be frank, I had not



thought that way. You know that I was a poor orphan. As a small boy, I had once visited this festival. I was awfully hungry. I tried to steal a few sweets from a shop. But I was caught and beaten up. I came running towards this well. I had decided to jump into it and end my life. Something glittering caught my sight. It was a silver coin. I changed it into ordinary coins and ate to my content. With the surplus, I bought a sackful of fruits quite cheap from a shop-keeper who was anxious to leave for the town on an urgent message. I sold the fruits roaming about in the villages and earned a good profit. By and by I grew into a trader. After we met and became partners, I have prospered well. But I cannot forget the fact that at the root of my prosperity remains the silver coin left by somebody near the well. That is why I make it a point to leave here an amount of three hundred and sixtyfive rupees—at the rate of a rupee a day—for some other needy man to benefit by it," explained Ravindra.

"My friend, it is a noble gesture and it speaks so sweet of you. But, I am afraid, your zeal



is misplaced. I am not sure that the money we would leave on the road would certainly do good to the person who gets it. Let us try and see," proposed Durgadas.

It was a moonlit night. They put some money into a bag and left it near the well. Thereafter they climbed a tree and waited.

Soon a mendicant donning a pious garb came there. He intended eating some food he had gathered and he was in need of water. While going to lower the bucket into the well, he noticed the bag. He opened it and unable to contain his



joy, spoke out to himself, "With this I can settle down in life, carry on some trade and also marry. This will bring more money to me. I will hire some hooligans and give a thrashing to my enemies."

He then walked away briskly.

"What! A little money could bring such a change in the mendicant's life!" muttered Ravindra. "He wants to marry at this age and punish his enemies too!"

Durgadas smiled and threw down a glittering silver coin.

A little while later two fellows were seen coming towards the well.

"My father had given me money to buy a cow. But I wasted it on gambling. I must die by jumping into the well," shouted the first one. The other tried to stop him.

But, coming near the well, the first one saw the silver coin. "Ha ha!!" he laughed. "I must gamble again with this. This time I am going to recover all I lost!"

"You must give me half of its value. I too had seen it!" cried out the second fellow. Both came to blows. Heaping abuses on each other, both headed towards the festival.

"O God! I never imagined

that the money we threw could cause so much evil!" said Ravindra

Next they threw a few more coins tucked in a handkerchief. Soon a tired villager with a heavy bundle of wood on his head came there and drew water from the well.

"I do not know when I will be able to reach my home. It is only tomorrow that I shall be able to sell this bundle and get a little money. I do not know what to eat till then," murmured the man as he walked.

"At last here comes one who is really needy. How happy would he be when he gets that money lying before him!" Ravindra whispered to his friend. Durgadas said nothing.

Next moment both saw that the man was about to tumble against the bag. But he avoided it and went his way!

"What a pity! The bag lay right in front of the fellow; yet he missed it!" murmured Ravindra with a sigh.

"My friend, now you have seen what happens to people who get money without any effort. They go astray. People who could perhaps put the money to right use do not get it!" observed Durgadas.

"What a blunder I have committed year after year by leaving my money here!" said Ravindra repentantly.

"Be sure, my friend, that I have not allowed your blunders to remain blunders. I have collected the bag every time. I have maintained a separate account of it. It is a good amount by now. We can spend it to establish a shelter for the houseless or a dispensary for the poor", said Durgadas. Ravindra's face brightened up.





Three Strange Things

Hundreds of years ago a small kingdom was ruled by a whimsical king. Like everybody else he loved to hear or read fairy tales and other stories of fancy. But unlike others, he believed in them and often brooded over weird and strange things.

He had a charming daughter named Prabha. The king decided to give half of his kingdom to her bridegroom. But who could be eligible to marry her? One who can fetch three strange things for him—was the condition he laid down.

Several candidates came to ask him what the strange things were. Most of them went back disappointed after hearing of them. A few even tried to fetch them, but in vain.

In a remote part of the kingdom lived a young man named Jayant. He had had the occa-

sion to see the princess. He developed a great desire to marry her. He met the king and wished to know about the strange things.

"Beyond my kingdom, in the southern direction, there is a forest. Inside the forest there is a very old temple. I have heard that there is a magic drum in the temple. If one beats it thrice, ten wonder workers would appear, ready to be at your beck and call. I want to have that drum, to begin with," said the king.

"As you wish," said Jayant and he galloped away.

He returned a fortnight later looking tired, but carrying the drum! The king was surprised. He beat the drum thrice. To his amazement, ten fellows rushed in and stood in attention. The king felt thrilled. He could

not decide what to ask of those wonder workers.

"My lord! Why not ask them to return with the ten most marvellous things in the world in six months?"

"That is an excellent idea," commented the king and he put Jayant's suggestion in the form of a command. The workers went away.

"What is the next condition I am to fulfil?" asked Jayant.

"Beyond our kingdom, in the west, there is a mountain with a dark cave. I am told that inside the cave lies a talisman. Any aged man who would put that on would slowly grow younger. Can you fetch that

for me?" asked the king.

Jayant bowed to him and, without a reply, galloped away. A week later he returned with the talisman. The king was delighted. He put that on.

"You look quite tired, my boy. Relax in the palace for a day or two. Then I will tell you what my last condition is," said the king affectionately.

Jayant stayed in the palace for two days during which he managed to meet the princess several times. She seemed quite fascinated with him.

"My brave boy, by the northern frontier of our kingdom flows a river. People have seen a strange parrot on its



bank which, on being asked, can produce gold mohurs. I wonder if you can catch hold of that bird!" said the king on the third day.

Jayant galloped away, to return after a fortnight. He had brought with him the parrot.

The excited king asked the parrot for a hundred gold mohurs.

"Tomorrow!" said the parrot.

Indeed, next day, on coming out of his bedroom, the king tumbled over a silken bag containing a hundred gold mohurs.

He was overjoyed. "Let my daughter be married to Jayant forthwith!"

The marriage was solemnised with great pomp and show. Jayant received half of the kingdom and, with the princess, went away to his village which was to be his capital.

A few days later the king asked the parrot for a thousand gold mohurs. "Tomorrow!" was the bird's response. But the king found no mohurs the next day. By and by he realised that "Tomorrow" was the only word the parrot knew.

Six months passed. The wonder workers never returned. There was no sign of the king growing younger either.

"I feel rather perplexed!" he confided to his minister.

"What is perplexing about it, my lord? Should we not be happy that our son-in-law is a clever chap? How could anybody have fetched things which did not exist? Anyway, my information is, the princess is quite happy. Let us be happy too!" replied the minister.

The king smashed the drum, threw away the talisman and let the parrot fly away.





LET US KNOW

What are the Seven Wonders of the world?

Yasmeen S., Hyderabad.

The Seven Wonders of the ancient world are: (1) The Pyramids of Egypt, (2) The Gardens of Semiramis at Babylon, (3) The Statue of Zeus at Olympia made by Phidias, (4) The Temple of Diana at Ephesus, (5) The Mausoleum at Halicarnassus, (6) The Colossus at Rhodes and (7) The Walls of Babylon, or the Light House of Alexandria known as Pharos, or the Palace of Cyrus.

The earliest list of these wonders was compiled by Antipater of Sidon (2nd century B.C.).

The Seven Wonders of the Middle Ages are: (1) The Colosseum of Rome, (2) The Catacombs of Alexandria, (3) The Great Wall of China, (4) Stonehenge of England, (5) The Leaning Tower of Pisa, (6) The Porcelain Tower of Nankin and (7) The Mosque of Sophia at Constantinople.

We would like to know the history of the Peacock Throne.

K. S. Narayanan, Madras.

Please see this column in the April '78 issue of your magazine.

I would like to know about the Qutb Minar.

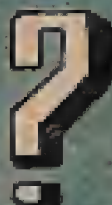
K. Ramya, Bombay.

Please see 'Monuments of India' in the April '78 issue of your magazine.

(Readers are requested not to send new questions for a few months. Let your magazine finish answering at least a part of the backload of questions.)

CHOOSE A TITLE AND WIN A REWARD

(You are invited to choose a title for the following story and write it down on a post card and mail it to 'Story-Title Contest', Chandamama, 2 & 3 Arcot Road Madras 600 026, to reach us by the 20th of June. A reward of Rs. 25.00 will go to the best entry, which will be published in the August '78 issue. Please do not use the same card for entering the Photo-Caption Contest).



It was night. The nobleman, quite drunk, was returning home.

He entered through the back door. In a room in the backyard he found someone standing. In the darkness he could not see the fellow's face.

"Who are you?" asked the nobleman. But no reply came.

That was a time when burglars and bandits had made the town their haunt. The nobleman was sure that the fellow in the darkness was a burglar. He brought out his pistol and fired.

His wife and servants came running with lanterns. It was found that what the nobleman mistook as a burglar was his own robe, washed and stretched there to dry.

"What a fool you are to spoil your costly robe with bullets!" lamented his wife.

"Tut, tut," said the drunk nobleman, "Thank God that I was not inside the robe myself when I shot at it!"

Result of Story Title Contest held in April Issue

The Prize is awarded to:

Mrs. Kuntal Gomez.

14-A, Ashoka Colony, Bagum Bagh.

Meerut 250 001.

Winning Entry—"RIGHTS OF ADMISSION DESERVED"

The prize-winning entry for the Story Title Contest held in March and published in the May issue of your magazine should read ROYAL FANTASY. The error that had survived proof-reading is regretted.

PHOTO CAPTION CONTEST



Mr. Bhelchandra Kadna

- These two photographs are somewhat related. Can you think of suitable captions? Could be single words, are several words, but the two captions must be related to each other.
- Rs. 25 will be awarded as prize for the best caption. Remember, your entry must reach us by 20th JUNE
- Winning captions will be announced in AUGUST issue.
- Write your entry on a POST CARD specify the month, give your full name, address, age and post to :

PHOTO CAPTION CONTEST
CHANDAMAMA MAGAZINE
MADRAS - 600 026

Result of Photo Caption Contest held in April Issue

The Prize is awarded to:

Ms. Theresa Doraswami,
4, Main Road, Royapuram,
Madras 600 013.

Winning Entry—'Thoughts to Share'—'Pots to Bear'



CHITRA is no more

BORN : 12th March 1912

DIED : 6th May 1978

We deeply regret to record the death of CHITRA, the chief artist of our *Chandamama*, on the 6th May 1978. We are sure, millions of our readers who had grown admirers of this gifted artist will mourn with us and share our sense of loss.

CHITRA's real name is T. V. Raghavulu, an Andhra from Madras city. He was born at Choolai and matriculated from the Hindu Theological High School. He was married in 1942.

He was in the A.R.P. during the Second World War, when the city of Madras was being evacuated under fear of enemy air-raids. Later he worked with Klein & Peyerl as a photographer-cum-block-maker and with the Oxford University Press as an artist-cum-salesman. On June 2, 1947, he joined *Chandamama* and remained with the publication till the end.

He is a self-taught artist and never had any formal training in art. He was a brilliant photographer too and some of his works won him awards in India and abroad.

CHITRA's death is another irreparable loss to *Chandamama* after our beloved editor Sri CHAKRAPANI's demise in 1975.

Over the years thousands visiting *Chandamama* paid their tributes to CHITRA, their dear artist and no doubt he was the source of inspiration for many to take to art. A legion of children's magazines carry illustrations which are a copy of CHITRA's style.

The light of CHITRA's art that delighted millions of children will never fade out.

May CHITRA's soul rest in peace.

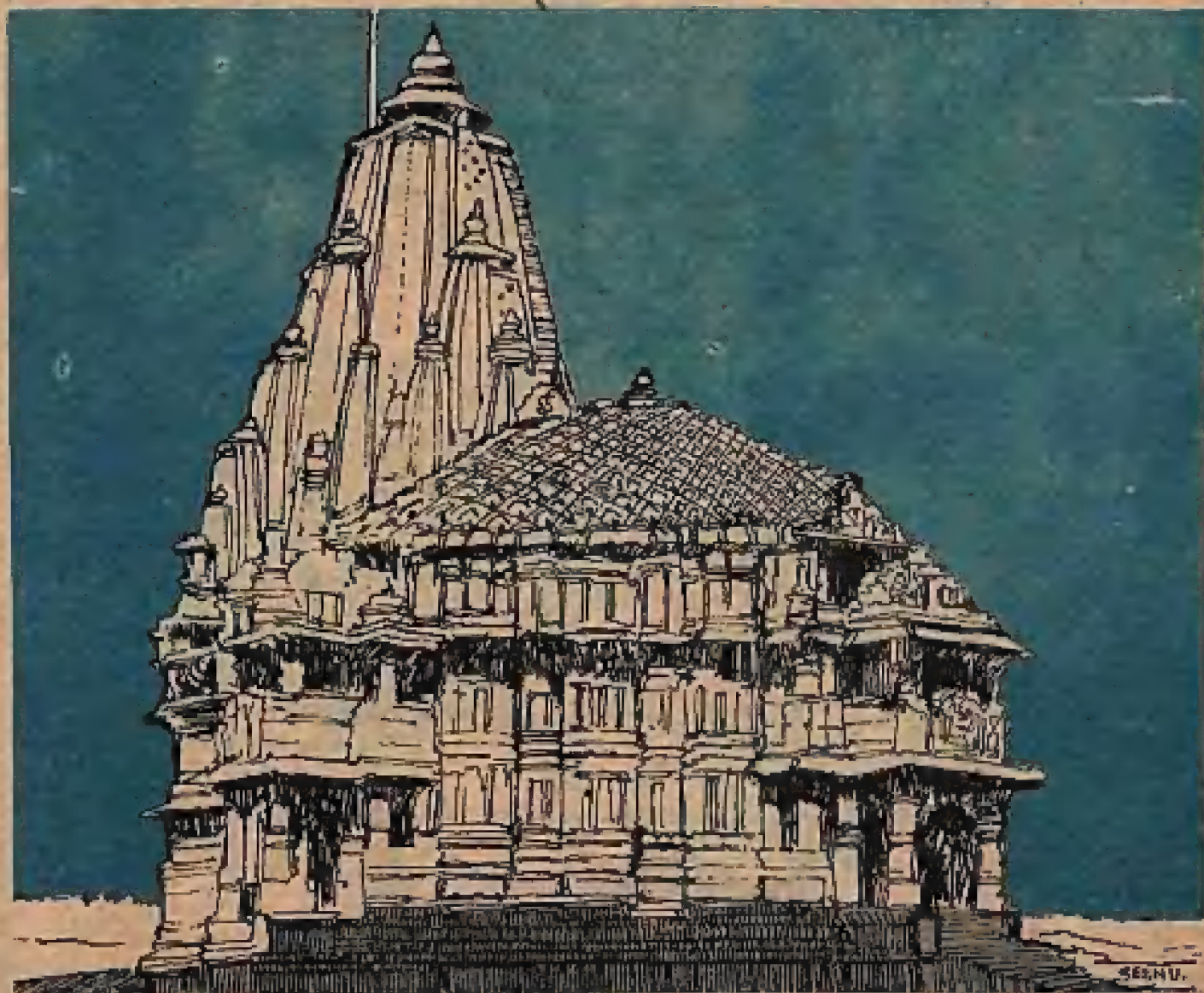
Publishers.

THE SHRINE OF SOMANATH

Once upon a time the river Saraswati flowed into the sea at the place famous in our epics as Prabhasa. There stands the shrine of Somanath—Lord of the Moon—who is none other than Shiva. This is in Gujarat.

Here a temple had been built to Lord Shiva over two thousand years ago. It had been rebuilt twice before the 10th century. Then, in 1026, Mahmud of Ghazni raided it. Fifty thousand people sacrificed themselves in a bid to protect the temple. But Mahmud plundered and razed the temple to the ground. A new temple was built which was again destroyed at the order of Alla-ud-din Khilji in 13th century. Over the ruins was built a temple again. Again it was destroyed at the order of Aurangzeb. Again a new temple was built.

Thus the monument represents the invincible spirit of the devotees.



A DOUBLE HUMOUR?

This happened a few years ago. In a conference a delegate regretted that the fellow-delegates were not conducting themselves as brothers. Suddenly one of the delegates stood up and protested, "Are we then brother-in-laws?" His remark aroused a hearty laugh. Encouraged, he repeated his question!

Nobody had the heart to tell him that it was not his humour that made them laugh, but his slip!

We are sure that our readers would never make such an error. Brother-in-law in plural becomes *Brothers-in-law* as Mother-in-law becomes *Mothers-in-law*, although *in-laws*, in slang, is used to mean relations acquired by marriage. However, let us take note of a few tricky plurals

Singular

Analysis
Basis
Crisis
Criterion
Datum
Erratum
Fungus
Madame
Medium
Memorandum
Synopsis
Terminus

Plural

Analyses
Bases
Crises
Criteria
Data
Errata
Fungi
Mesdames
Media
Memoranda
Synopsises
Termini



It was a night blackened by clouds. Queen Shaibya, carrying her dead child on her shoulder, arrived at the cremation ground. Harishchandra, unable to recognise them, demanded his master's dues from them. But the queen had nothing to give.



But before long Harishchandra recognised his wife. He was overwhelmed with sorrow at the sight of his dead child. Both the parents decided to sacrifice themselves in their son's pyre.

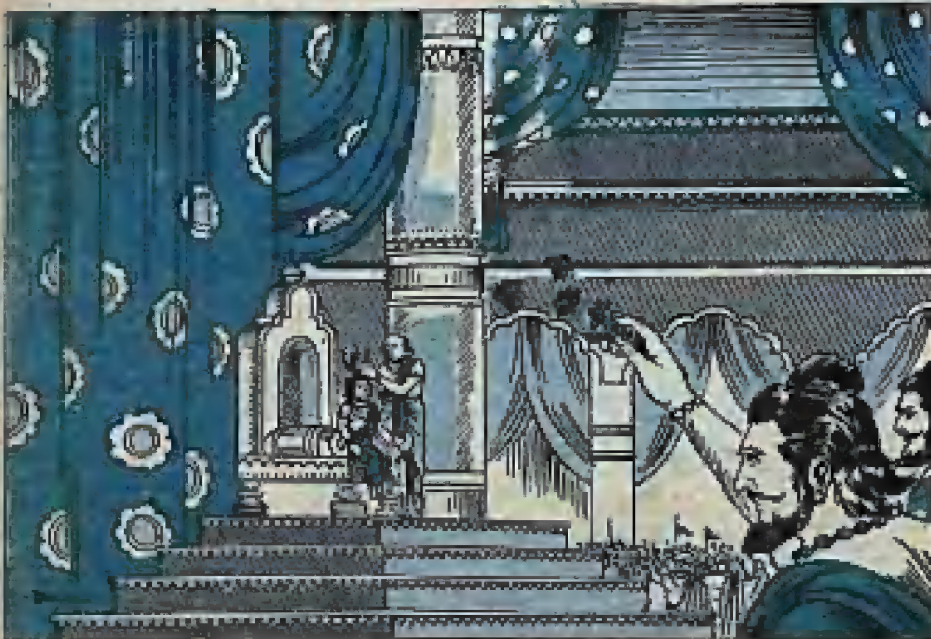
But Harishchandra thought that it would be treacherous on his part to kill himself without his employer's permission. To inspire sympathy in his rude employer's heart, he sat in meditation.





When he opened his eyes, to his amazement, he saw the God of Dharma and the sage Viswamitra standing before him. Prince Rohit had woken up as if from a swoon. "You and the queen are welcome to heaven for your unique devotion to Truth," said the god.

"But I cannot go without the sanction of my master who is the keeper of this cremation ground," said Harishchandra. It was then revealed to him that his master was none other than the God of Dharma himself. And Viswamitra admitted that he had been thoroughly impressed by the king's conduct.



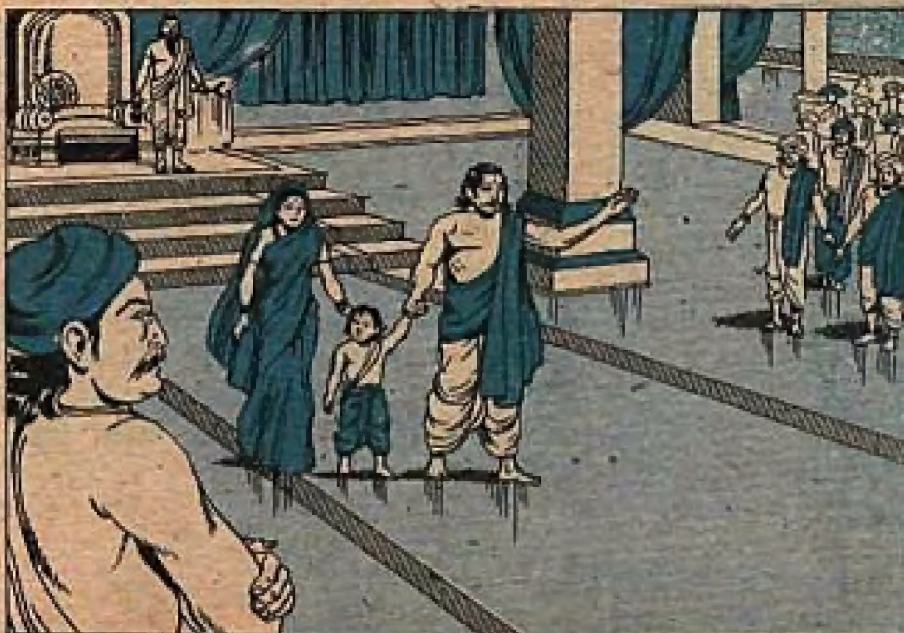
But Harishchandra was not willing to go to heaven without being assured of the welfare of his subjects. He was promised that care would be taken of them. Rohit ascended the throne. King Harishchandra and Queen Shaibya then departed to heaven.

TRIUMPHANT IN THE TRIAL



Long long ago, there was a great king, belonging to the Solar dynasty, named Harishchandra. He was renowned as a just and truthful king. Out for hunting one day the king entered a forest.

It so happened that just then, in a remote part of the forest, the sage Viswamitra was engrossed in *tapasya*, and was about to achieve his *siddhi* when the king disturbed him. The sage grew furious.

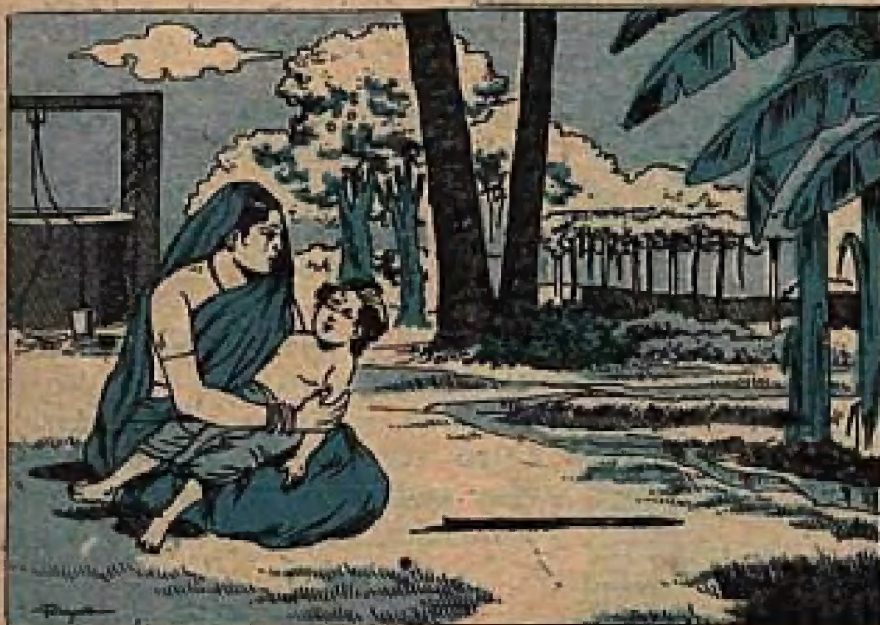


The sage was determined to avenge the loss of his *siddhi*. First he extracted a promise from the repentant king that he would give him whatever he demanded. Then he demanded of the king his kingdom along with all his wealth. The king, true to his promise, left the palace with his queen, Shaibya, and his son, Rohit.



Harishchandra went away to Kashi. But Viswamitra followed him there and demanded his *Dakshina*—the supplementary donation—which was a must. The queen and the prince became servants in the household of a Brahmin.

But as the money given by the Brahmin was not sufficient for the *Dakshina*, the king had to engage himself as an assistant to the keeper of a cremation ground. He had to guard the ground and realise fees from those who came to burn their dead.



One day, Prince Rohit, while working in the Brahmin's orchard, was bitten by a snake. He cried out. His mother came running to him. With his head on his mother's lap, the boy breathed his last.



'It's the bestest drink!'



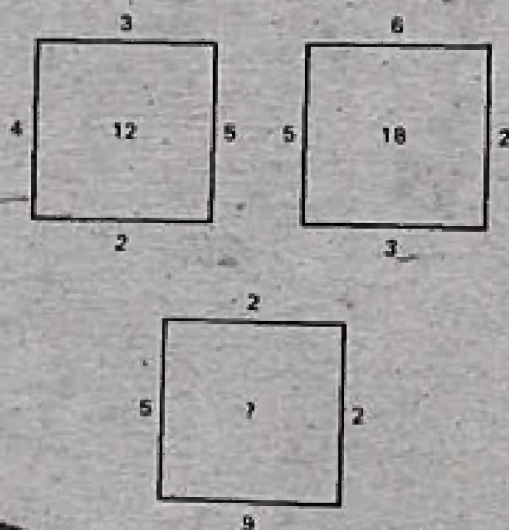
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